

Hi, I'm a veteran Connecticut teacher. In my earliest years I taught in Catholic schools, salary began at \$7000 per year, and it cost me money to drive to school. My parents tried to talk me out of teaching, since they were both highly effective teachers with a combined salary of \$50,000. But I always wanted to be a teacher, it's a passion, a calling, a career. I was ecstatic when I was hired to teach fourth grade in a public school!

I'm a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence and I'm a National Board Certified Teacher. I've strived to be a better teacher every day and year of my career. I work at least ten hours per day and I spend \$1000's of dollars per year on supplies to energize my student's learning. I always said if I won the lottery I'd keep teaching because I love planning exciting and creative ways to lead students to learn and love learning. I have loved the challenge and joy of turning recalcitrant students into life-long learners. There are thousands of Connecticut educators just like me working tirelessly to teach all the students in our public schools.

Race to the Top, SEED, SBAC, and the implementation of CCSS have hurt our public schools, teachers, and students! For the first time ever, I'd retire if I could. The emphasis on testing and evaluating teachers based on test results is JUNK science. Students who practice and learn to bubble in correctly do not become better students. Testing does not improve learning. Rich experiences, dramatic play, creativity, practice solving difficult open-ended real-life problems...all these experiences enrich education and lead to better prepared students. But the emphasis on CCSS aligned test bubbles is changing teaching and learning. By fifth grade, students are burned out from all the testing and test prep. They are tired and their love of school is plummeting.

It seems like the 1% see an untapped market in our nation's public schools. Since they crippled our economy with their greed on Wall Street, these super rich are now trying to siphon money from our public schools into private markets. Testing, test prep, CCSS aligned products, hardware, software, infrastructure...these companies all benefit from Race to the Top, testing, and the common core. Students, schools, parents, teachers all suffer, but the 1% don't care about the 99%.

This race to privatize our nation's schools for profit is immoral. Charter schools do NOT outperform their public school counterparts. And public schools take students with IEP's, intellectual disabilities, behavior problems, attendance issues, ESL, psychiatric issues...Public schools take all students and we do not kick students out to fool the public by falsifying graduation rates and test scores.

Please rescind Race to the Top and SEED, support Connecticut's public schools, students, teachers, parents, and voters!

Tracy Ajello